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22 February 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: All OCI Division, Staff, and
Branch Chiefs

A few weeks ago each DDI component was asked to prepare a memorandum comparing its situation in the 70's with that of the 60's. In reviewing our response, it struck me that our people might be interested in seeing how far we have come and how our present problems appear from this perspective. Attached, therefore, is a somewhat expanded and amended version of that memorandum. I invite you to show it to any of your people who may wish to read it.


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Director of Current Intelligence

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Attachment: a/s

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1. OCI's most important mission, current intelligence support to the President and the NSC, has not changed at all in the last decade, but the environment in which OCI functions has changed remarkably since 1960. The Kennedy Administration felt a much greater need for current intelligence than its predecessor, and turned to OCI to supply it. OCI was able to respond largely because it had placed heavy emphasis in the previous decade on experimentation and training of personnel, while a fairly rudimentary daily and weekly were virtually its entire output.

2. The Kennedy staff asked for, and received, intensive current support on a daily and sometimes hourly basis. When John McCone became DCI, he added his own requirements to this load. OCI's memoranda production rose from less than a dozen in 1959 to over 600 in 1962. It is hard now to remember that as late as 1960 neither the White House nor the Department of State had any sort of substantive out-of-hours watch organization. DOD had such a function, but it was divided among the services. CIA had the rudiments of a centralized operation, but it was in its infancy. By 1963-4, however, under the pressures of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the present network of operations centers had come into existence, and current intelligence and analysis were regularly exchanged and discussed 24 hours a day.

3. These trends continued through the Johnson Administration, and by the time President Nixon took office the central role of current intelligence in national security had been institutionalized. The Nixon staff seemed satisfied with this situation, although it put less emphasis on immediacy and more on comprehensiveness. The new NSC Staff procedures added another dimension; OCI was drawn into much closer support of policy officials and committees at all levels, and found itself drafting the

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intelligence assessments which are part of many NSSMs. At the same time OCI's product benefited immensely from the better understanding of policy and the needs of its makers which these new relationships provide.

4. Over the 1960's, the content of current intelligence broadened. We are now called on to report more frequently and in more detail on military matters. The technological means have been found to provide better and more timely intelligence on these matters, and OCI--in more recent years in cooperation with OSR--has found ways of bringing these new means to bear on current reporting. Toward the end of the decade current economic intelligence took on greater importance for OCI's primary readership, and more space was allocated for OER to speak on these subjects. As these problems grew and their study became more specialized, there was a tendency for OCI, which in 1960 had covered the waterfront except for Communist economics and science, to transfer primary responsibility for economic and military subjects to OER and OSR. The transfer has not been a complete one; OCI has the best expertise available on a number of politico-economic topics and will continue to report on them. But the process will continue. It has not been frictionless, but it has been a healthy development. The OCI analyst remains responsible for the synthesis of political, sociological, military, and economic factors into policy decision, and CIA's growing sophistication in all these disciplines makes this analysis even more of a challenge now than it was ten years ago.

5. Another and rather unhealthy trend over the decade has been the growth of current intelligence as a function at lower levels of the bureaucracy. In the 60's the Armed Forces doctrine of force-feeding the commander with intelligence from above came into full flower. Improvements in communications made possible broadside dissemination, and DIA has used them for its Intelligence Summary, which tends to parallel the CIB. OCI is also not without guilt. Thus what starts out as national intelligence is driven outwards and downwards by established machinery to a degree which seriously inhibits the use of sensitive intelligence in documents originally intended only for the national level.

6. Ten years ago, OCI devoted almost all its efforts to current reporting, although it had a limited research

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effort in Chinese and Soviet affairs. In 1962 this program was split off and became the nucleus of the Special Research Staff. At about the same time, on the other hand, it was decided that OCI should produce the political, sociological, and subversion sections of the NIS and should absorb the organization and most of the personnel then engaged in this task. The concept was a brave one: OCI would acquire greater depth of political knowledge and its analysts would acquire greater expertise through shifting back and forth between current reporting and NIS-writing. The results, however, have been mixed. OCI has indeed acquired a deeper base of knowledge and a broader range of people, but the concept of the universal all-purpose analyst has been, bluntly, a failure. Current intelligence writing and NIS writing are not totally compatible. All of our officers can write one or the other. Most can write both, but not all. And however even-handed we can try to be between the two disciplines, we must recognize that the primary job of OCI is current intelligence. We can in a few cases promote the exceptional NIS specialist to GS-15 but we cannot make him a division chief. This has led to some morale problems which we can never solve completely. But the flexibility which [REDACTED] is injecting into the NIS program--whereby a loose-leaf format encourages more frequent updating of dynamic elements and less frequent polishing of slower-changing ones--may ease our difficulties. If this trend takes hold, the two disciplines which OCI now practices should begin to converge. In the meantime, we can take satisfaction from the fact that we are turning out approximately the same volume of NIS work in 1972 that we were in 1962, of substantially higher quality, and with a little over half the manpower.

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7. Along with the assignment to OCI of the NIS has come the mission of "political research", in parallel to the missions of OER and OSR. No one has ever precisely defined what this means. I interpret it to mean the acquisition by a desk analyst of the depth of knowledge which enables him to write good current intelligence, or a good longer memorandum or, if that is called for, a good General Survey. In fact, many of our memoranda have required a great deal of research, although the writers have been unwilling to label it as such for fear of falling into bureaucratic traps. In 1969 we embarked, with too much fanfare, on a new Research Program which was supposed to demonstrate what we were already doing and put more effort into

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"research" as well. It was not notably successful, and I suspect some of our analysts may have expected more from it than it could give. We have indeed produced a series of topical monographs, above and beyond the memorandum series, which have explored new ideas in depth and reexamined old ones. We have not, however, done as much of this as we would like, largely because we have been unable to release from current duties the analyst who can really do the job properly at the time it really needs to be done. A quality product needs a quality analyst, and we are unwilling to settle for less. Nonetheless, as INR is reduced, we become for more and more areas of the world the only place to which the Federal Government can turn for political studies. I will be satisfied if in this field we can: 1) maintain our bank of knowledge; 2) respond to requests with scholarly and literate studies; 3) afford the analyst who has a longer paper in his craw the opportunity to produce it. Our program labelled "research" will be modest, but our research activities will be broad. They will in fact underlie everything our analysts do, from responding to a telephone query to spending six months on a monograph, or updating an NIS Section.

8. It has been an eventful decade. Landmarks for OCI include:

- Establishment of a unique intelligence channel to the President, through the President's Daily Brief (originally President's Intelligence Checklist) - 1961
- OCI assigned political research function, including NIS program - 1962
- OCI sheds last vestiges of old CIA "Comint Empire" - 1962-64
- OCI Watch Office evolves into CIA Operations Center with Clandestine Service participation - 1963-65
- OCI pioneers adoption of MTST and MTSC systems for intelligence production - 1965-1968
- Opening of LDX net linking major agencies in Washington - 1966

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--OCI and ORR spawn OSR - 1967

--Establishment of "three-tiered" Central Intelligence Bulletin (which provided for reporting of sensitive information) - 1968

--OCI Divisions assigned role in Kissinger NSC system - 1969

--OCI reorganized to 1) rationalize staffs, 3) upgrade political research, 3) eliminate old Division level, 4) raise grade of branch chiefs and senior analysts - 1969

9. Thus in the 60's OCI came into its own as the primary political intelligence producer for the US Government. Now in the 70's we face a decade in which we can see no lightening of the tasks assigned to us. We know by now what the present Administration requires. A new administration, should one be elected this fall, may well be committed to substantial changes in foreign and military policy. It should, however, have an even greater need for current intelligence to measure the impact of its changes and to judge their consequences. In any case, OCI must always be ready to change its style, as it has before, to meet the requirements of a new administration. Furthermore, it must eventually be braced for changes of a "generational" nature, as with the transition from Eisenhower to Kennedy. We are always the first in CIA to feel such changes; we are where the stone drops in the still pond. We pride ourselves on flexibility and skill at improvisation; we may well need both.

10. However these uncertainties affect us, we expect the guts of our job--the transformation of reporting from abroad into political judgment expressed in literate prose--to remain in the 70's much as it was in the 60's. The generation of Americans which seems likely to hold senior political positions in this decade apparently expects its information requirements to be met by print rather than voice or picture. We expect to produce the printed word, while maintaining a modest exploration of other techniques against the possibility that a "television generation" may eventually come to power.

11. We also expect in this decade to resist, as we have in the last, any effort to subject the central process

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of political analysis to automatic data processing techniques. It is not that we do not find these techniques useful; it is rather that we are concerned with the political process in foreign lands. Political decisions are made by human politicians, and are subject to what Dostoievski somewhere calls "the natural perversity of the individual." They are not predictable by machine or reducible to machine language. We expect that machines in the 70's will give us more and more help with dissemination of our input, with the organization of our material, with our files, and with the mechanical processing of our output. But we expect the central analytic judgment will depend, as always, on the intuition of the desk analyst, backed by his deep immersion and long experience in his subject country. We hope in the 70's first to deepen his immersion and lengthen his experience, and, second, to improve the quantity and quality of machine files available to him. And we hope that we will be able increasingly to reward the dedicated country specialist with higher grades without imposing on him administrative responsibilities which lessen his usefulness.

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12. These programs may help alleviate problems which are now present and could grow worse--the reduction of political reporting from the field which has resulted from [REDACTED] and the general growth of sophistication in communications security abroad. In contrast to the military-technological field there is considerably less officially procured political intelligence available than there was in 1960; there may be even less in 1980. Certain embassies have virtually abandoned basic reporting, while others are as good as ever. The trend is down, however, and--alas, unlike military intelligence--no new technological sources are taking the place of the old. We can expect to be asked to do more and more with less. We shall seek to compensate by better exploitation of open sources--which will need more procurement funds and more language training--and by getting more of our people abroad longer and earlier--which will require a change in attitude and again an increase in funds. The USG, nevertheless, must face the fact that fiscal savings in political collection by officers on the ground, while easy to achieve, are not worth the relatively minor sums saved. It makes no sense to spend large sums finding out exactly what weapons systems the enemy has if, at the same time, we

deny ourselves access to his thinking in order to save much smaller sums.

13. Three other developments which will affect our world of the 70's are the development of new collection systems, the budgetary reductions now being imposed on the other USIB agencies, and the reorganization of the Community. Although in the initial stages not much is clear, it seems reasonable to expect that OCI will: 1) have to adapt itself, primarily in the Operations Center, to the near real-time receipt of intelligence; 2) receive more direct and specific guidance as to the topics which concern our primary consumers and the manner of presentation they prefer; 3) be expected to give more emphasis to these consumers and less to the variety of secondary consumers we now have; 4) be subjected at the least to rigid manpower ceilings; 5) be expected to take an even more central role, and perhaps pick up more of the departmental load now carried by INR and even by DIA. The first four we can handle. As to the fifth, we would flourish in a more central role, but would have trouble with the departmental aspects.

14. A development which is running against the trend toward a more central role for CIA and OCI is the erosion of security discipline in the national security apparatus. Mutual suspicions tend to undermine the principle of free exchange of intelligence which we all hoped was learned once and for all at Pearl Harbor. Increased controls and limited disseminations make inter-agency coordination of the CIB increasingly difficult and in some cases impossible. This forces us toward the provision of sensitive intelligence only to the readership of the PDB, a level which a realistic man would admit is usually too high to take effective action on information received. These developments are beyond OCI control; we can only point to the dangers, and try to make sure that, if nowhere else in the USG, all intelligence on a given situation, of whatever sensitivity, is seen at least by one responsible officer in CIA, the OCI desk analyst. I beseech cooperation, or we risk, at the least, stepping fifteen years back in our development, and at the worst, an intelligence disaster--all the key pieces were not allowed to come together.

15. Finally, let me say a word about personnel. OCI has high quality officers, young, middle-aged, and approaching

retirement. All three groups, if one can so divide them, work like hell, and we need them all. Two problems seriously concern me, however. The first is a sharp drop in the number of new professionals coming in. There are a number of reasons: a necessity to cut back OCI's ceiling by attrition; the reduced CT program; a reluctance on our own part to hire more analysts than we can usefully employ under normal (non-crisis) situations; increased productivity (that is, professionalism and maturity) from the people we do have. A combination of these factors, however, means that what was a flood in the mid-sixties is now a trickle. If this trend continues, the average age of our professionals will rise sharply, and the first stages of bureaucratic ossification will set in. This is something OCI cannot afford.

16. The second problem is the age of our senior officers, the office, division and staff chiefs and their deputies. With a minimum of exceptions, these officers are between 45 and 48, and have been appointed within the last 2-3 years. I would not blame the talented officer in his 30's if he were somewhat discouraged at the evident length of the long cold path to glory and supergrades, but I cannot afford to lose him either, because we will need him badly when the present leadership retires.

17. I am not satisfied that we have done more than identify these problems so far. There are a number of approaches to the first, and we shall explore all of them. The second essentially involves arranging our own voluntary departure, and we approach this gingerly. But OCI over its 21 years has shown a certain resilience and adaptability. I am certain that we will meet the challenge of the 1970's, and that the D/OCI of 1980 will be as confident in his officers at all levels as I am in mine.